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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

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Thursday, 14 May 2015, 9.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Sixth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2015/298)

Third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2169 (2014) (S/2015/305)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Sixth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2015/298)

Third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2169 (2014) (S/2015/305)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, and Ms. Valerie Amos, and Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/298, which contains the sixth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), and to document S/2015/305, which contains the third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2169 (2014).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: Since I arrived in Baghdad at the end of March, I have endeavoured to meet as broad a range of Iraq's political, community and religious leaders as possible, to hear their views on how Iraq and its different components can overcome the challenges and threats the country faces, and to set a steady course towards unity, cooperation, reconciliation, stability and development. While major differences of opinion and approaches exist, there is a general consensus that in order to successfully counter Iraq's common enemy, the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), unity and cooperation among all components of the Iraq society are needed, and that the way forward is to accelerate the implementation of the Government's ministerial programme and the national political agreement to start a process of national reconciliation.

The Iraqi security forces, together with the Peshmerga, patriots of the popular mobilization forces and Sunni tribal volunteers, supported by the international coalition and countries of the region, are making advances and liberating territory from ISIL. I salute their bravery and commitment. They are saviours of Iraq. However, ISIL is far from being defeated and Government gains remain at times fragile. The ability to liberate a city or a territory does not necessarily mean an ability to hold it.

Vast areas of Iraq and millions of Iraqis remain under the control and influence of ISIL, which continues to perpetrate horrendous crimes and human rights violations against the Iraqi people, in particular women, children and minorities. ISIL recently added to its crimes the barbaric destruction of Iraq's cultural and historical heritage in another attempt to destroy its national identity. Many areas not under ISIL control, including Baghdad, have been rocked by violence, terrorist and sectarian. Particularly appalling is violence against internally displaced persons (IDPs), who are increasingly targeted and criminalized.

It is important that local fighters and authorities be properly empowered to take their share of responsibility for the liberation from ISIL and for holding and governing their areas. The Government's efforts to provide the necessary financial and material support to tribesmen and local authorities need to be expedited. All of that, and notably military supplies and assistance, must be coordinated with and sanctioned by the respective authorities of the State. In that regard, I welcome the recent establishment of a Government committee to oversee the implementation of support. I also welcome the determination of the Government of Iraq to exert firm control over all elements taking part in liberation operations across Iraq and to hold to account those who have committed crimes, as indeed some opportunistic and criminal elements continue to engage in atrocities, revenge killings, looting, expropriation and the destruction of property of the local population and returning of IDPs. I applaud both Prime Minister Al Abadi and His Eminence Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani, who have taken a firm stance against such transgressions.

In the majority of my meetings with Iraq's political representatives, I have heard one message — a military

solution alone will not be enough to defeat ISIL. If any military gains are to be sustainable, the Government of Iraq must also restore the confidence of disaffected communities that they will assume a share in governing their own affairs and in the State's ability to ensure their protection from violence, deliver justice and create conditions for their fair participation in society. Until the majority of IDPs conclude that conditions for the safe and sustainable return of civilians have been created, such returns will not happen. And one of the consequences might be the continuation of involuntary demographic changes, including in the disputed territories between Baghdad and Erbil.

As a priority, the Government needs to urgently continue taking measures to restore civilian responsibility for security and the rule of law in the liberated areas. In addition, the Government needs, in coordination with the local authorities, to restore public services and rebuild basic infrastructure as soon as possible so as to facilitate the return of the displaced. Worryingly, however, Prime Minister Al Abadi has underscored to me his Government's great difficulties in responding to these urgent stabilization needs, in addition to meeting the massive humanitarian needs. The Government faces serious constraints in terms of funds and material for stabilization and rehabilitation. The liberated areas are in urgent need of clearance from explosive remnants of war. I hope in particular to see the United Nations Mine Action Service return in force to Iraq, and that cannot happen without donors' support. Withdrawing resources from other areas of the country to meet these stabilization needs would put additional pressure on the already heavily impacted areas from the IDPs' influx and beyond.

I strongly urge Security Council members and the whole international community to support the Iraqi Government's efforts and to provide funding for the multitude of needs. Despite being a middle-income country, Iraq is temporarily unable to cope alone with the challenges of the security and humanitarian crisis and the stabilization and rehabilitation efforts. Unfortunately, however critical the urgency of continuous and massive support for Iraq may be, the international community's response has been grossly insufficient, as if the existence of other old and new crises were enough to excuse a waning attention to the plight of Iraq and its people. Lack of support, however, might eventually mar the existing opportunities to make Iraq successful in its fight against terrorism and to make it an example for other parts of the region and beyond, contrary to some trends prevailing elsewhere. Without such support, this fragile chance might disappear.

Political processes and national reconciliation efforts are essential to overcoming the underlying challenges facing Iraq and its unity, and to creating sustainable solutions for the peaceful coexistence, cooperation and development of Iraq's diverse components. As such, more vigorous and productive efforts on the part of the Government and the political forces to adopt priority legislation that will aid national reconciliation efforts are needed. A draft amnesty law is with the Prime Minister. Parliament is finalizing legislation to restore balanced representation in Iraq's institutions. The national guard law is under discussion. I urge Iraq's political leaders to work together to find consensus, while the Government and Parliament of Iraq need to take the steps necessary to accelerate the adoption and enactment of these laws. I therefore welcome the extension of Parliament's session.

These efforts towards political dialogue must also be accompanied by efforts to promote reconciliation at the community level. Religious leaders, scholars and community, tribal and political leaders alike must promote the principles of non-violence, religious tolerance, inclusiveness and forgiveness, as well as accountability for crimes committed. All of these messages were echoed in my meetings with the leadership of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. As the implementation of the December 2014 joint agreement on energy exports and revenue-sharing takes hold, so the relations between both sides strengthen. Prime Minister Al Abadi's visit to Erbil on 6 April was a clear expression of this goodwill to cooperate. I encourage both sides to continue working together towards resolving open issues and towards the enactment of the legislation that will be necessary to secure the sustainable management and fair distribution of Iraq's natural resources. And let us not forget that the Kurdistan Region of Iraq also needs international support. Currently, it contributes in a major way to the fight against ISIL and hosts over 1 million IDPs within its own estimated population of above 5 million people.

Prime Minister Al Abadi's determination to strengthen Iraq's regional ties with its regional partners in mobilizing their support for Iraq and in the promotion of a common regional approach to the regional and global threat of ISIL has been received positively by Iraq's neighbours. During my recent visit to Kuwait and Jordan, I heard a clear message that a united, peaceful

and stable Iraq would make for a stable and prosperous region — a message of support for the Government of Iraq and of readiness to coordinate closely with it in all areas.

The unpredictable and unstable security situation and violence continue to take a terrible toll on the men, women and children of all Iraq's communities. From June last year until the end of April 2015, over 44,000 civilian casualties have been reported, including at least 15,219 killed and 29,493 wounded. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) was also affected when, on 26 April, a UNAMI national staff member was abducted by unidentified gunmen in Baquba, in Diyala governorate. The United Nations is increasingly concerned by the lack of progress on this issue, and strongly urges the respective authorities of Iraq to ensure his swift release.

The humanitarian consequences of the conflict are enormous. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, will speak on this matter, and I fully support her analysis and appeal, while commending the work of the humanitarian community.

Allow me to turn to the sixth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2015/298), on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-party persons and property. On 26 April, I visited Kuwait on my first regional visit, and I had to conclude that we run the risk that future generations will continue to carry this burden unless progress is made after so many years without tangible results, notably on missing persons. The respective Iraqi authorities are called upon to urgently take practical steps that will move this caseload forward. UNAMI will continue to assist.

With regard to the question of missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, Iraq has found and turned over some objects such as books and artefacts belonging to Kuwait, a move that is sincerely appreciated. However, the issue of the archives remains one that is difficult to understand. Again, Government commitment must be urgently translated into action.

To sum up, my first impressions after just several weeks in Iraq are mixed, but with a positive perspective. The complexities and complications are enormous, as are the constraints and risks. Progress is slow, regardless of a clear vision on the part of the Government and the political resolve of the Prime Minister. The plight of Iraq and its people is unjustly and unjustifiably overshadowed by other developments in the region, at a time when more support is needed to counter and degrade the terrorist group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and to work for the unity of Iraq based on balancing the rights and interests of its components. Yet opportunities exist as well. Continuous, long-term and adequate political, financial and material support for Iraq, its Government and its people by the international community, and notably by the countries of the region, is needed to turn those opportunities into reality for the benefit of Iraq, the region and beyond.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Amos.

Ms. Amos: I would like to compliment the political report (S/2015/298) presented by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš, along with a more specific report (S/2015/305) on the humanitarian situation in Iraq.

Since my previous briefing to the Security Council, in November 2014 (see S/PV.7314), the number of Iraqis requiring humanitarian assistance has grown to over 8.2 million people, an increase of 3 million in 5 months. That includes the 2.8 million people who have been internally displaced since the conflict began in the Anbar governorate in January 2014. Half of the displaced are children. All 18 governorates in Iraq have been affected. Iraq also continues to host approximately 250,000 refugees from Syria. Conflict, targeted attacks on civilians and intimidation — often along ethnic and sectarian lines — continue to plague the country. New displacement continues unabated, with the displacement of an estimated 120,000 people from Ramadi last month, which is a stark example of the fragile situation in Iraq.

As the duration and scale of the Iraq crisis increases, so does its urgency. Families can no longer afford to sustain themselves. The resources of host communities have been drained. Public services and infrastructure are overloaded. Poverty and unemployment have increased, and the cost of living has soared. Newly displaced families are finding it increasingly difficult to find safe areas of the country where people can host them in their time of need.

I am also extremely concerned about the well-being of the millions of Iraqis who live in areas outside Government control, including under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Next

month will mark one year since the attack on Mosul and the spread of ISIL in the country. Reports indicate deteriorating conditions in those areas, including diminishing access to clean water, medical care and food. Most of those areas, however, remain largely out of the reach of humanitarian organizations. People are becoming more and more cut off from the rest of the country, with reports that many are now not allowed to freely leave those areas or to communicate with those on the outside.

I have reported to the Council on many occasions about the flagrant violations of human rights that persist in conflict situations. Iraq is no different. Women and girls continue to experience horrific acts of sexual violence, physical abuse and enslavement. Many of the estimated 1,500 women and children who were abducted by ISIL last year remain under the group's control. The few women and girls who managed to escape in the past few months tell appalling stories of systematic rape, physical abuse, forced marriage and human trafficking. Communities have welcomed those women and girls upon their return, but are struggling to cope with the magnitude of suffering that their mothers, sisters and daughters have endured.

An entire generation of Iraqi children has been put at risk by the conflict. They have been forcibly recruited into armed groups, used as suicide bombers and exposed to profound levels of violence, which will affect them for the rest of their lives.

I am also concerned by reports that other parties to the conflict are violating international law. Restrictions on the freedom of movement of civilians by security forces and armed groups are growing worse, thereby limiting the ability of civilians to flee conflict and enter safer territory or to return home after areas have been retaken. In April, security or civilian authorities in seven governorates restricted the entry of internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing conflict in Ramadi. Those acts are fuelling tensions between communities and deepening fissures that will require significant mediation over time to overcome.

The crisis in Iraq has also had a significant impact on the availability of basic services, food and shelter. Nearly 7 million people — or 20 per cent of the population — are unable to access essential health services and water and sanitation services due to the conflict. At least half of them are estimated to be women, and 18 per cent are children under the age of 5. Dozens of hospitals and pharmacies have been damaged or are closed. The Fallujah General Hospital has been damaged over 30 times. Maternal and neonatal services are nearly non-existent in the worst-hit areas. Water and sanitation needs are particularly acute in non-camp situations, where over 90 per cent of IDPs live. The risk of disease due to poor sanitation and limited access to health services is a major concern, particularly as cholera is endemic and measles is present.

Food insecurity has increased by 60 per cent in six months; 4.4 million people now require food assistance. The Government's public food distribution system is operating, but the coverage is uneven. Reduced planting and limited access to agricultural areas still under ISIL control means that the prospects for future harvests are bleak.

Over 1 million displaced Iraqis need shelter, particularly in the central and southern areas of the country, with more than 28 per cent of all IDPs living in public institutions, including schools and mosques, and some in unsafe buildings.

The United Nations and its partners have continued to further scale up their operations to respond to needs. Nearly 1 million displaced people have been provided with non-food items, such as blankets, plastic sheeting and jerry cans. Some 368,000 people have received help with shelter, including though the 30 camps built by the Government, the United Nations and other partners since July 2014. Another 13 camps are under construction.

On 7 April, Iraq celebrated one year of being polio-free. The United Nations continues to support the Iraq Ministry of Health in maintaining its polio-free status through regular vaccination campaigns targeting over 5 million children under the age five. The United Nations is also 3 million people through the provision of essential drugs and medical equipment.

Despite that support, we face immense challenges in providing assistance in Iraq. Access remains a key challenge. On 28 April, the Iraqi Government sent a request to the United Nations asking for urgent humanitarian assistance to be sent to areas in Haditha district, in the Anbar governorate, which is cut off by ISIL forces. People are short of food, water and medicines. Due to insecurity, a United Nations convoy meant to has not been able to reach the 26,400 people trapped in the area.

We are working to expand humanitarian access, and now have a team of access and negotiation experts

on the ground. With the support of key Member States and other influential actors inside and outside Iraq, we hope to increase our reach to those areas.

Other challenges are emerging in areas of return. Those who wish to return home are afraid for their safety, so the number of returnees remains limited. Ongoing security operations, the widespread presence of improvised explosive devices and the lack of public services have also dissuaded return. Returns must continue to be voluntary, when conditions are right.

Funding shortfalls are also restricting our ability to scale up even further. Increasing needs have exhausted the generous contributions to last year's appeal. This year, only 11 per cent of the $1.2 billion required for the year has been received. Last week, health services in the Arbat IDP camp in Sulaimaniyah were interrupted due to alack of funding. In April, food distributions were scaled back in the Dohuk governorate — the area with the highest number of IDPs — to half-rations for those living outside of the camps. The food pipeline is due to break fully in June. A new humanitarian response plan will be released in Brussels on 4 June, and I hope donors will give generously.

The humanitarian outlook in Iraq remains deeply worrying. The number of people in need of assistance has grown seven-fold in just under a year. This number is likely to increase further before the end of the year as the conflict continues and as fear of sectarian-motivated retaliation spreads through newly accessible areas. We must do more to protect Iraqi civilians from these rising levels of violence. We must work to expand the assistance provided to affected people in all parts of the country.

Addressing the humanitarian needs in Iraq requires collective action. However, humanitarian assistance alone will not bring about a solution to the crisis in Iraq. The ongoing political and security conflicts must be resolved in order to end the displacement and the suffering of one quarter of the country's people.

The President: I thank Ms. Amos for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating Lithuania on its accession to the presidency of the Security Council this month and on its sterling work in that role so far. We pay tribute to the Jordanian delegation for its skilful efforts in leading the Council last month. We welcome Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, and thank him for his first briefing. We would also like to thank Ms. Amos for her very touching briefing.

Iraq is facing unprecedented challenges, be they in relation to terrorism or other crimes. Addressing those challenges requires collective efforts by the international community. We have to step up and strengthen coordination. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari said during his most recent visit in New York:

> "We are faced with a problem of terrorism, which is a multinational problem. We are not facing an Iraqi-Iraqi problem, or even an Iraqi-Arab problem — we are facing a globalized problem. All States of the world, regardless of the continent where they find themselves, have had citizens come to Iraq. Indeed, there are terrorists from 62 different other countries present in Iraq right now."

We welcome the international support given to Iraq through resolutions on the fight against terrorism, especially from the Security Council, including resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2199 (2015). However, these resolutions have not been fully implemented by all Member States and, despite the efforts undertaken by Iraq and its partners at the international level to fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and despite the rout of thousands of its soldiers, the flow of terrorist fighters continues. I ask the Security Council to reiterate the need for all Member States to respect the implementation of Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2178 (2014), which calls upon all States to take the necessary measures at the national level to put an end to this flow of foreign fighters, including those attempting to join ISIL in Iraq and Syria, as well as other groups and entities associated with it.

We would like to reiterate the fact that the fight against terrorism can take place only through a comprehensive, regular and serious approach aimed at facing up to the terrorist threat, isolating it, neutralizing it, choking it off — in which all Member States would participate, especially our neighbours. Whether it is in Iraq or Syria, we have to prevent the proliferation and spread of terrorism to other States. It is simply unrealistic to hope to destroy ISIL in Iraq alone.

ISIL today still possesses freedom of movement in Syria, which is clear from what has happened over

the last couple of years. The Iraq position remains unchanged when it comes to the need to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Syria and to fight ISIL and affiliated groups, including those associated with Al-Qaida, if we are to see a return to peace, security and stability in both States.

While Iraq has been facing ISIL's terrorism, savagery and violence within its borders, it has also been confronted with a humanitarian catastrophe as a result of the capture of Iraqi cities by terrorists. This situation has led to major flows of civilian exiles from their homes to safer regions. Close to 2 million Iraqis have been displaced and are suffering immensely. In that regard, I would like to recall that, last August, the United Nations declared the situation in Iraq a level-3 emergency, the highest level when it comes to emergencies. The situation since then has continued to deteriorate and it is now an extremely heavy burden for the Iraqi Government and the United Nations active in Iraq to bear, working as they are to contain the constantly worsening humanitarian crisis.

This situation will only increase the threats and dangers throughout the different regions in Iraq. The Iraqi Government is working to come up with a plan that would tackle the humanitarian dimensions of the problem and set up aid, sanitation, water provision, medical and psychological care for the benefit of local communities. Yet despite the significant response from the international community, both financially and logistically — assistance we have enjoyed from an number of countries — the level of the emergency and our inability to forecast what the situation in Iraq will be, compounded by the problem of access to humanitarian assistance to regions under ISIL's control, leaves us with very few choices in dealing with the crisis.

The cities and regions that are welcoming the displaced in Iraq are now suffering from a great deal of tension — tension that transcends their ability to tackle the problems. All this does is increase the pressure on the Iraq Government, which finds itself unable to adequately respond to cover all the needs. The only solution to the human tragedy of the millions of displaced people is to liberate the cities from ISIL control as rapidly as possible. One also has to guarantee a safe return for displaced persons to their homes and ensure that they are rebuilt. We ask the international community and our partners in the fight against terrorism to mobilize resources and step up efforts to increase international assistance with a view to stopping international terrorism today.

ISIL's crimes against Iraqi civilians were referred to in the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published on 28 March 2015 as crimes against humanity, war crimes and even crimes of genocide. Those crimes have been directed against all sectors of Iraqi society: Kurds, Arabs, Sunnis, Shiites and all others. That savage organization has destroyed and pillaged the Iraqi cultural heritage, an integral part of the global cultural heritage, in a very organized, deliberate way. It has targeted cultural and religious sites, libraries and museums to simply cleanse the country of its cultural diversity and to finance its activities. It intends to destroy cultural diversity and the collective memory of Iraq and to destabilize social harmony by threatening the diversity of the country's cultural identity, thereby hindering the Iraqi Government's efforts to restore stability, national reconciliation and understanding.

To confront that challenge, we are working in partnership with the German federal Government and UNESCO to draft and adopt a new General Assembly resolution that would complement Security Council resolution 2199 (2015) and reiterate the need for Member States to preserve Iraqi historical assets and civilizational heritage as part of the civilizational heritage of humankind. The destruction of cultural heritage is a crime that cannot go unpunished. We call on all Member States to support the draft resolution when it comes before the General Assembly.

Destroying Daesh is a primary and essential objective. We must succeed, and not only for reasons of security and stability along our borders or indeed for the preservation of the territorial integrity of the State or a number of States faced with the danger that entity represents. This is not solely about confronting the savage acts and crimes of a terrorist organization that seeks to foment chaos and destruction in the States where it is active. Our struggle also about achieving what is in essence a humanitarian objective and addressing the problem of millions of impoverished civilians. We are facing a humanitarian disaster; we must protect civilians, end the cycle of destruction, and meet the fundamental basic needs of displaced persons, especially children and women. We must also protect religious sites and preserve our millennial intellectual diversity.

Faced with those challenges, my Government is working at the local level, in particular to safeguard the democratic achievements enshrined in our Constitution. We hope to accelerate the adoption of laws on generalized amnesty, the establishment of a national guard, and the federal high court, and to forge an agreement with the federal Government of the Kurdistan Region to foster national reconciliation and maintain national interests.

In the same framework, my Government is working to promote relations with neighbouring States. There has been progress and positive developments in our relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has announced that it will soon send an Ambassador to Baghdad. In addition, we thank the State of Kuwait for its announced cancellation or delay of our debt repayment. Those actions clearly highlight the success of Iraq's efforts to restore friendly relations with our neighbours. The Iraqi Government also has a legal and humanitarian commitment to working to resolve issues related to the disappeared and to the archives. We are exploiting modern technology to accelerate the process related to the Kuwaiti disappeared.

Finally, Iraq is facing immense security challenges and economic conditions that it will not be able to tackle alone. We welcome and thank our international and regional partners for their role and the United Nations for its efforts, particularly through its Mission in Iraq, in providing assistance and advice to the Iraqi Government. We pay tribute to the courage they have shown in their ongoing work and the provision of humanitarian assistance in extremely difficult conditions in our country. We wish Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, every possible success in his endeavours. We reiterate the Iraqi Government's readiness to lend its assistance to all his efforts and to the country team to ensure success.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.